

80%



1996 Virginia Slims Music/Club Night Recommendation

Introduction

The Virginia Slims brand is seeking new ways of reaching their existing consumer and interacting with potential consumers on a face to face level.

There are currently 75 country music clubs with capacities of 1,000 to 3,000 around the country. These clubs are very popular with females, 21-40 years old, who have the opportunity to dance, mingle and listen to live music in a smoker friendly environment. We believe these clubs provide an opportunity for Virginia Slims to directly interact with their female consumer.

Country Music is one way to reach female consumers. It has a large female audience with 57% of country music concert attendees and country music record buyers being women. Unlike years past, the climate is very good for female country artists. Never before have so many female artists been signed to major record labels, charted with so many singles and sold so many albums. Country music lyrics are now reflecting the "modern woman's" point of view and represent the Virginia Slims image. Most of the Virginia Slims 1996 key markets are strong country music markets and therefore, we believe we can reach the Virginia Slims consumer through country music.

Objectives

- Awareness and extension of Virginia Slims image
- Broaden Virginia Slims appeal to women smokers, especially 21-29 years old
- Build continuity of purchase among Virginia Slims smokers and create trial purchase opportunities among competitive smokers
- Interact directly with consumers on a face to face level in a smoker friendly environment
- Enhance brand visibility
- Generate names for the database
- Reward Virginia Slims and competitive smokers

Strategies

- Sponsor a "country music club night" tour featuring a female country artist who represents Virginia Slims' attitude and image

2040147200

- Execute a bar night promotion in conjunction with the "country music club night"
- Develop an integrated marketing plan encompassing retail promotions, direct mail and sweepstakes
- Sponsorship would allow Virginia Slims to interact directly with their consumers in a smoker friendly environment
- Provide signage, pos materials and publicity to participating clubs to extend awareness and visibility
- Female artist would perform "live" at 30 country clubs in key brand markets
- Conduct name generation activities at participating clubs

Tactics

- Create club night name and graphics that represent Virginia Slims to be used on pos, bar night materials and signage
- Hire an agency to develop and execute retail promotion, direct mail, etc.
- Create publicity campaign to further awareness of Virginia Slims sponsorship
- Identify charity benefiting women in need
- Donate \$1.00 from each ticket sold to charity
- Generate names at venue

Recommendation

Virginia Slims would sponsor an established artist who has name recognition and hit records, but is not yet at the headline level, to perform live at 30 country clubs in Virginia Slims key markets. The artist would be booked on either a Friday or Saturday night which are the hottest nights at clubs and would therefore take advantage of a guaranteed audience. We would recommend the program taking place in the Spring and Fall which is when the clubs do their best business. Virginia Slims would have banners and bar materials at the venue for three weeks to promote the upcoming concert night as well as stage signage for the live performance. We would conduct name generation on the concert night as well as the two weekends prior to the concert. Virginia Slims would tie-in with a women's charity and have the club donate \$1.00 from every ticket sold to the charity. We would incorporate a public relations campaign around these dates

2040147210

to further awareness of the brand's sponsorship of the club concert, and the brand's tie-in with the charity.

Rationale

Sponsoring a female artist and working with women's charities are consistent with the Virginia Slims image of celebrating women and supporting women's issues. It would leave a very positive impression on our consumers. Virginia Slims would be unique in sponsoring a female artist at the club level, which has not been done before.

Initially we recommended a 100 city tour sponsorship with a headline female country artist in 3,000+ venues of which at least 20 cities would be Virginia Slims key markets. This enabled Virginia Slims to capitalize on a national promotion which could also be used to spin off retail, bar nights and direct mail campaigns. While this scenario greatly reduced the risk for Virginia Slims financially, it didn't guarantee us an audience of females between the ages of 21 and 34. A big sponsorship tie in would have greater impact from a publicity standpoint and give Virginia Slims greater visibility. The downside risk, which we were aware of, is that you don't have as much control of the choice of venue, the promoter for the event and how that promoter chooses to sell the show. We believe that being in a club environment not only gives us total control over the look of the venue, but puts us in a smoker friendly environment that is more appealing to the targeted demographic. Although the club tour is not as visible as a tour sponsorship, it gives Virginia Slims a greater presence in a smaller setting which ultimately will have a greater impact on the consumer. Virginia Slims will still be able to leverage music at retail and/or through direct mail and at the same time touch our consumers one on one in a smoker friendly environment. Additionally, the risks associated with selling tickets at a theater or arena are totally eliminated, since the clubs have a built in audience and are filled to capacity every weekend.

Budget: \$1,900,000

2040147211